

# Top 10 Questions about Moving the Grayling Senior Center to the Fish Hatchery Building

**Question:** Why can't the Senior Center remain at the current location?

**Fact:** Unfortunately, staying at our current location is not an option because we've outgrown the space and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will not allow us to expand. In October 2004, a building committee was formed to review space needs. A joint task force was then formed from the two agencies to work toward meeting the space issues at the current location. The Commission on Aging (COA) proposed moving the Grayling Housing Commission (GHC) offices to a vacant building across the street to allow the Senior Center expansion to the entire existing building. The GHC tenants voted against the proposal which was followed by the GHC Board voting 4-0 against the proposal. Through a letter, HUD further advised that the COA may not expand their use of the facility.

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**Question:** How will the COA be able to continue to serve the seniors living there?

**Fact:** We care very much about the seniors that live around the current Senior Center. Many of them are wonderful volunteers and add significant value to our organization. But, the number of GHC seniors is a very small minority of those we serve. Only 38% of the apartments have seniors who have participated in a meal or activity since October 1, 2008. Last fiscal year, this was only 2% of the total population we served. Although we value the seniors that live here, we cannot make long term decisions based on the needs of just 2%. **Jennie Hatfield, GHC Director and the COA Director, Alice Snyder will work together with the GHC senior tenants to continue to meet the needs of these residents.**

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**Question:** Isn't the Fish Hatchery building falling apart? Is it really safe?

**Fact:** A structural integrity inspection was done by Joe Duran, Crawford County Building Inspector and Wade Trim, Inc. Engineering Firm of Gaylord in December 2007. Mr. Duran states, "**I have visually observed no safety or hazard to the structural integrity of the Fish Hatchery building.**" Wade Trim's professional engineer states, "it is our opinion that this building is in very good shape". The building will have completely new mechanical, electrical, plumbing and sanitary service and systems.

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**Question:** How are seniors supposed to get up and down the stairs in this building?

**Fact:** The Fish Hatchery building will be updated to meet all current building codes and ADA accessibility guidelines, including but not limited to new stairways, an elevator, new entrance and wider doorways.

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**Question:** Isn't the Fish Hatchery building a fire trap?

**Fact:** Once the Fish Hatchery building is renovated, **the new Senior Center will have a sprinkler system/fire suppression system throughout the building.** The building will meet all current building and fire code regulations. Neither the County Building Inspector or the Grayling Fire Marshall will let a building be opened that is not completely safe for the public.

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**Question:** How is the Fish Hatchery building going to be accessible?

**Fact:** The County currently has an Easement Agreement with Mercy Hospital which allows pedestrian and vehicular access to the Fish Hatchery building from Michigan Avenue. In addition, **a new entrance would be created off of North Down River Road** which would lead directly back to the parking lot for the new Senior Center. Site work will be completed to minimize slopes and to create level parking areas to the building. **Parking lot will have a minimum of 75 spaces.**

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**Question:** Should we be saving the property for Mercy Hospital expansion?

**Fact:** Currently, **there are no known plans for hospital expansion.** Also, the deed for the Fish Hatchery property has restrictions that will not allow expansion of Mercy Hospital on the property.

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**Question:** Can the County afford 1.5 million dollars for renovation of the Fish Hatchery building?

**Fact:** The money needed to make the payments on the new Senior Center's bond is currently available within the County's budget. **There will be no new millages sought to pay for the renovations of the Fish Hatchery building. The money is already there.**

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**Question:** Has there been pressure from the County to relocate the Senior Center to the Fish Hatchery?

**Fact:** When it became clear that the GHC building was not an option for future expansion, the Fish Hatchery building was considered because the County already owned the building and several renovations had already been completed. A "due diligence" document was created listing a set of criteria and a point system for evaluating six identified sites. The final options were the Fish Hatchery building and a Build New site. Based upon points assigned, these options were ranked virtually the same. **All of this has been done in public meetings with minutes posted at the Senior Center and on the COA website at [www.crawfordcoa.org](http://www.crawfordcoa.org).** There have also been many articles published by the Avalanche with updates as the process moved along.

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**Question:** Has the COA Director been forced to relocate to the Fish Hatchery building?

**Fact: No. I fully support the Board's decision to move the Grayling Senior Center to the Fish Hatchery building.** Having additional space will allow us to offer more services and recreational activities to the seniors we serve. There are abundant opportunities for outside recreational activities including fishing, nature trails, outdoor BBQs and more. We'll be directly tied into an already wonderful park system which includes the Fish Hatchery operation and the Grayling Township Park. We will also have the chance to reintroduce a historic piece of Grayling. From an environmental standpoint, it's been said that the "greenest" building is the one that's already built. This will refresh one of our boarded up buildings in town. It will be a modernized, historic building on riverfront property that the senior community along with their friends and family can utilize.